

Public Involvement

Introduction

This Section summarizes the public involvement activities throughout the Corridor Planning Process, including the key community meetings that identified the critical issues and policy recommendations for the Study. The essence of the public involvement program was to provide a forum for two-way communication between the Project Management Team and the public stakeholders. The *24/40 Corridor Study* provided an opportunity for Leavenworth County, the two participant cities, and the participant agencies to educate the public as to the relationship between land use and transportation; and for participants to hear ideas and concerns of the general public about transportation and land use choices on the corridor.

The public workshops helped the parties reach informed consent and find practical solutions that will work for all partners in the project. The public involvement process allowed the public to:

- Have an opportunity for providing meaningful input,
- Be kept informed of project findings and recommendations, and
- Be involved in developing the corridor plan recommendations.

The public involvement process provided various forums for public participation at five key project milestones:

- Focus Session Meeting
- Planning Policy Charrette
- Visual Preference Workshop
- Draft Recommendations Open House
- Final Recommendation Presentation

A Citizen Advisory Committee composed of two dozen public representatives from public and private sectors, organized by the Project Management Team, and facilitated by the project consultant team, provided input in preparation for and/or as a part of each public meeting.

In addition, the Project Management Team and consultants, working with ETC Institute - a professional polling firm working as subconsultant to the lead consultant – conducted a *Community Opinion Survey* of corridor issues. The community opinion survey was administered to a randomly selected sample of 1,200 residents in the south half of Leavenworth County, the results of which are summarized in **Appendix A**. The 601 responses—a 50 percent response rate—helped affirm the ideas promulgated during the public workshops.

Summary of Critical Corridor Issues

Throughout the planning process, there were several themes identified during the various public meetings, workshops, and the community survey results related to the future of the US 24/40 Corridor. These issues critical to the corridor are summarized below. The remaining

portion of this section summarizes the public comments and recommendations received throughout the planning process:

- Maintain the rural character and sense of open space along US 24/40 Highway,
- Preserve the mobility and safety of US 24/40 Highway,
- Limit direct access to US 24/40 Highway through the development of an appropriate supporting street network, including “reverse frontage” (or “backage”) roads,
- Establish good planning policies to direct urban growth to desired growth areas adjacent to the cities of Basehor and Tonganoxie and direct large-lot residential development to areas outside the cities’ future growth areas,
- Establish development standards to maintain a quality image for the corridor by addressing issues such as building placement, sign aesthetics, and good development design, and
- Preserve the Stranger Creek corridor and incorporate recreational uses such as multi-use trails.

Focus Group Meeting

In October, 2006 a community meeting was held in Tonganoxie. The meeting included a Focus Session which provided an opportunity for residents, landowners, business and civic leaders, and other community stakeholders to identify and verify issues and opportunities that are critical to the future of the US 24/40 Corridor.

Early in the project, members of the Project Management Team identified key stakeholders who had been involved in the corridor in some public capacity and had demonstrated prior interest and involvement in the future of the corridor. The consultant team conducted informal interviews with these stakeholders, and applied the knowledge obtained as a basis for further exploration of corridor issues through the focus session process. The process of **Issues Identification** used at the Focus Session was a structured idea sharing process. Participants initially introduced themselves and shared each other’s ideas and issues to the entire group. The series of issues were organized and discussed in the context of the following categories:

- Community Identify and Image
- Access Management and Traffic
- Land Use and Development

The opening lists of issues identified in the large group were then refined, clarified and prioritized in smaller “break-out” groups. The following lists summarize the top issues as identified by the meeting participants, with the number of final votes identified behind each issue.

CORRIDOR IDENTITY AND IMAGE

1. Rural and Open Space Preservation (17)
2. Site Development Standards (16)
3. Frontage Roads and Overpasses (9)
4. Lighting for Safety and Beauty (4)

ACCESS MANAGEMENT AND TRAFFIC

1. Geometric Improvements (14)
2. Access Management (limit signals, right locations) (13)
2. Mobility (13)
3. Need to Plan (11)
4. Safety is Key (5)
4. Allowances for Land-Use Access (5)
5. Accommodate Local Traffic (2)

Identified but Not Ranked:

Enjoy no-stress driving (0)

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

1. Local street cross-connection north-south/east-west to serve local development while preserving highway capacity (8)
2. Contiguous development from the cities and the urban services – out to rural areas (7)
3. Recreation opportunities for bikes and pedestrians – (Multimodal) (6)
4. Maintain Sense of Place: What makes Leavenworth County/Tonganoxie/Basehor its own place/(rural) (5)
4. Site development standards to ensure quality development – landscaping (5)
4. Financing – paying for growth (5)
5. Safety at the schools (children) (4)

Identified but Not Ranked:

Control Industrial Growth/Environmentally Friendly (1)

Balance of Development – residential/commercial/industrial (0)

Business Park Development (0)

Planning Policy Charrette

In November, 2006 a community workshop was conducted at the Basehor-Linwood High School. The meeting included a facilitated Planning Policy Charrette to build on the critical issues identified by participants at the October Focus Session. The Charrette was a fast-paced, interactive workshop for solving problems posed to the group of participants using the critical issues.

The Planning Consultant began the workshop by presenting background information related to land use, the market analysis prepared for the corridor, and access management options. Workshop participants were later placed in small work groups and charged with helping identify preferred solutions to the critical issues in the corridor. Supplies included workbooks with questions, an area map, markers, and other tools necessary to record preferences, goals, objectives, actions, and strategies for resolving these issues. The group recommendations addressed issues ranging from future land use and the preferred future development pattern, preferred access management strategies, parks and recreation, and corridor image.

Key access management concepts, as illustrated in the following photos, were presented to the participants to provide them a fuller understanding of access management.

No Access Management



Access Management Issues



Transportation System Concepts

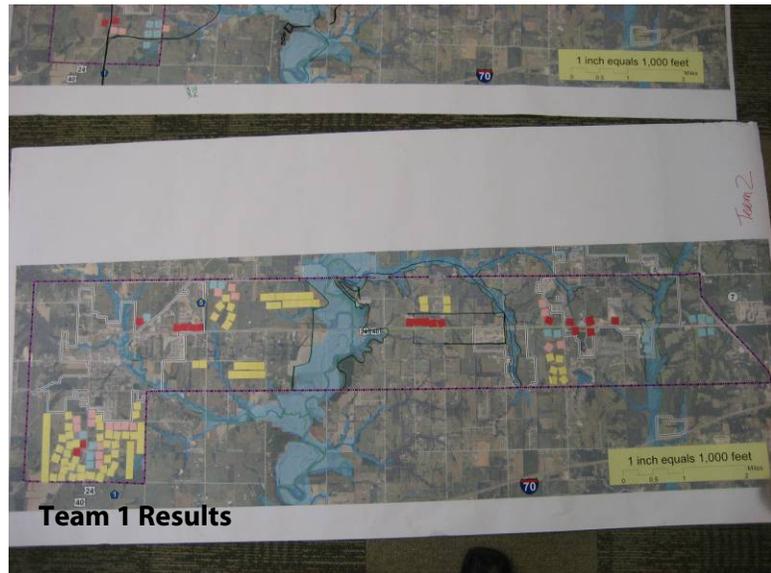


Access Management Concepts

Each group appointed a spokesperson who briefly summarized the group's key findings at the end of the session. The following summarizes the responses by the three groups:

TEAM 1 – SUMMARY

1. No heavy industrial on corridor, but light industrial okay
2. Cluster development districts (rather than allow strip commercial) and apply overlay standards with good planning policies
3. Parks and Open Space: Take advantage of Stranger Creek: Multi-Use Trails
4. Coordinate City/County Standards for: Signage, aesthetics, site plan/landscaping/higher density development
5. Landscaping for Highway-facing Development; street lighting standards, etc.



TEAM 2 – SUMMARY

1. Land Use: Mixed Use – Maintain existing; attract new; emphasis on “*planned development*” (retail, light industrial, etc.)
2. Development Pattern: Discussion focused on land between the two cities:
 - Direct more dense residential closer to the cities
 - Direct large-lot residential farther out away from the cities
 - Industrial should be a part of planned industrial parks
 - Need to attract commercial development – employers
3. Parks & Recreation:
 - Keep floodplain area of Stranger Creek natural
 - Keep parks closer to the cities/population centers
4. Corridor Identity:
 - Setbacks should vary – depends on type of business
 - Limit metal buildings close to road/visuals matter close to road
 - Sign restrictions (size, illumination, height)
 - Similar to K-10 Corridor looks and pattern/keeps a more open feeling
 - Right-of-way for future mass transit
5. Public Realm:
 - Gateway entrances into the cities

6. Traffic/Access Management:
- Stop lights every mile
 - Leavenworth and Parallel improvements



Team 2 Results

TEAM 3 – SUMMARY

1. Shared sewer project by both cities. Trails with trailheads including horse trails with bike friendly roads
2. Passive and active recreation in the Stranger Creek basin. Cities share sports park.
3. Standards for design within corridor visibility. Signage standards on corridor.
4. A street "grid" is good. Support reverse frontage roads with room for separation from highway.
5. Limit left turns/support medians. Reduce access onto 24/40 or reduce speed limit.



Team 3 Results

Visual Preference Workshop Summary

In December, 2006 a Visual Preference Workshop was conducted at a community meeting at the VFW in Tonganoxie to build upon the prioritized issues and recommendations from the Focus Session and the Planning Policy Charrette. The purpose of the Workshop was to:

- Identify visual preferences to link development policy and design standards; and
- Use the visual evaluation as an important bridge between planning and implementation.

The Visual Preference Workshop was conducted by organizing images into the following categories:

Land Use Evaluations

- Moderate Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Local Commercial
- Regional Commercial
- Light Industrial
- Access Management

Signage Design Evaluations

- Monument Signs
- Pole Signs
- Wall Signs

Streetscape Identity Evaluation

- Gateways
- Rural Streetscape
- Median/Roundabout Landscaping
- Buffers and screening
- Setback and Drive Experience

Roadway Lighting Evaluation

A complete summary of the workshop is presented in **Appendix B**. The following are the top rated images and the desired characteristics for future development identified by planning participants. These characteristics serve as the basis for the US 24/40 Corridor Guiding Principles and Corridor Identity Design Guidelines (**Ref. Section 9, Corridor Identity**).

Land Use Evaluations

<p>Moderate Density Residential</p> 	<p>High Density Residential</p> 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Architectural Detail</i> • <i>Garages vary (do not dominate the front façade)</i> • <i>Sense of depth (recesses and projections)</i> • <i>Larger Appearance</i> • <i>Front Yard Landscaping (rather than concrete)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Big House” Residential Appearance</i> • <i>Craftsman style</i> • <i>Has sidewalks, front porch</i> • <i>Detached garages</i> • <i>Landscaped area between building and street</i> • <i>Break up the variety of materials if there are numerous units</i> • <i>On-street parking</i>
<p>Local Commercial</p> 	<p>Regional Commercial</p> 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pedestrian and Shopper Friendly</i> • <i>Variety of architecture</i> • <i>Visual consistency</i> • <i>Landscaping around buildings</i> • <i>Blends well</i> • <i>Part of a planned district</i> • <i>Control of traffic movements</i> • <i>Provides a sense of community (identity)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Themed Design</i> • <i>Consistency and variety</i> • <i>Nostalgic</i> • <i>Good scale</i> • <i>Useable second story</i> • <i>Town Square Appearance</i>

Land Use Evaluations

Light Industrial	Access Management
	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Architectural embellishment and details • Trees and Landscaping • Visitor friendly • Clean/Neat appearance • Good setting • Office Appearance • Elevated above street grade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited access allows for higher travel speed • Safe with no vehicular turning conflicts

Signage Design Evaluations

Monument Signs	Pole Signs	Wall Signs
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All monument signs are acceptable • Better than a pole sign • Context sensitive design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean and modern appearance • Does not look like a sign • Has a monument sign appearance (cannot see the pole) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blends in with building design • Not cluttered • Does not appear like an afterthought

Streetscape Identity Evaluations

Gateways	Setbacks and Drive Experience
	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Clean lines</i> • <i>Clearly identifies an "entry"</i> • <i>Creates a park-like appearance</i> • <i>Has an English flair</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Natural appearance</i> • <i>Landscape set-back area</i> • <i>Larger building set-back</i>
Rural Streetscape	Median / Roundabout Landscaping
	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Raised median</i> • <i>Trees in raised median</i> • <i>No overhead power lines</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Landscaping provided</i> • <i>Low maintenance plantings</i> • <i>Flowers</i> • <i>Park like appearance</i>
Buffers and Screening	Roadway Lighting
	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Large variety and quantity of plantings</i> • <i>Natural Appearance</i> • <i>Low maintenance plantings</i> • <i>Variety of color</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ornamental Appearance</i> • <i>Thematic Design</i>

Community Opinion Survey

ETC Institute, in association with lead consultant BWR, conducted a survey of residents in the south one half of Leavenworth County during the spring 2007. Of the 1,200 county households randomly selected in the south part of the county, more than 600 responded—a strong 50 percent response. The survey asked about transportation and land use along US 24/40. Input included perceptions of safety, preferred configuration of access onto US 24/40, and commercial and residential development within the corridor.

A highlight of the survey results show that a strong majority of the 600 respondents said they were either “somewhat” or “very concerned” about safety along the US 24/40 Corridor. Most respondents agreed that new access onto and from US 24/40, including streets and driveways, should be limited in order to maintain current traffic flow. Respondents were divided on whether to reduce the number of existing driveways along US 24/40; about 30 percent said yes and another 30 percent said no, while 33 percent of respondents were neutral on this issue, and the rest undecided. A majority of respondents said commercial and residential development plans should focus on reserving open areas for rural uses. Most supported keeping such development in or near the cities of Basehor and Tonganoxie.

The survey was a vital step in evaluating communitywide perspectives on corridor development and potential. A complete survey summary was posted on the corridor project Web site in spring 2007 at www.marc.org/transportation/us2440/ and is attached to this report (**Ref. Appendix B, 2007 US 24/40 Corridor Community Opinion Survey**).

Open House Meeting

The consultant team drafted policies for traffic and access management, land development practices, and corridor identity based on the previous public input, feedback from the Project Management Team, and engineering and planning judgment. Exhibits illustrating the study concepts and draft recommendations were presented in an open house setting in March, 2007 at the Basehor-Linwood High School. The meeting provided the public the opportunity to ask questions of the consultant and Project Management Team. Questionnaires were provided to the participants to make it easier for them to comment on each of the exhibits. The comments received were primarily supportive of the draft policies. There was some interest expressed in allowing right turn only access points midway between the full access points onto U.S. 24/40.

Final Recommendations Presentation

A presentation of the final recommendations of the study was made to the public in July, 2007 in the Tonganoxie High School. The recommendations for traffic and access management, land development practices, and corridor identity were presented by the consultant in a power point format. In addition, exhibits summarizing the recommendations were displayed at the front of the auditorium. Following the presentation, the consultant and other members of the Project Management Team answered questions through one-on-one discussions with the interested public.